Five day week in the Post Offices

2624. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the post office in India observe six-day week as against the five-day week followed by other Central Government Departments;

(b) if so, the reasons for this discrepancy;

(c) whether it is proposed to extend five-day week to the post offices also and if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether there is any pressure from the All India Postal Workers Union for a demand in this regard; and

(e) if so, the reaction of Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Post Offices are operative offices and continue to work on a six-day week basis to provide essential public utility services. The essential services extended through the post office is operational in nature. Five-day week routine has been adopted only for the civil administrative offices of the Central Government doing Secretariat type of work, without reduction in the total number of working hours as under six-day week working.

(c) No, Sir. In view of the position stated against (b) above, the question does not arise.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) In view of (d) above the question does not arise.

Non-Payment of dues by telephone companies

2625. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether no charges are levied for local telephones in foreign countries;

(b) whether an amount of Rupees 796 crores is outstanding against certain telephone companies and they refuse to pay even the 20 per cent of the dues every year ; and

(c) whether the common customer using local telephones are penalised by raising telephone tariff and local phone charge to make with the losses incurred due to non-payment by the telephone companies ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) As per available information, in some countries local telephones are provided free. However in a number of other countries charges are levied for local telephone calls.

(b) Most of the private Cellular and Basic licensees had not been paying the licence fee dues and had requested several measures like moratorium on licence fee payments, extension of period of licence etc., on several grounds, interalia, non-viability of their projects, poor cash flows and delays in governmental clearances etc. In January 1999, the Government as a pro-tom measure asked the licences on 25-01-99 to pay at least 20% of the accumulated licence fee dues by 28-2-1999 in order to establish their bonafide. Some licensees failed to pay 20% of their outstanding dues. Consequently, their bank gurantees were invoked and six licences were terminated. All the licensees who complied and paid 20% of their outstanding dues are at present in the process of migration to the New Telecom policy 1999 regime. Except M/s Spice [Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (Circles) Licencee for Karnataka and punjab], all have cleared their outstanding dues in terms of the migration package. M/s Spice have been given time upto 15-4-2000 to make payment of the dues along with additional cash penalty for not making the payment within the scheduled dates. Details of outstanding dues in respect of M/s Spice, in terms of migration package is shown in the statement *(See* below*)*

(c) No, Sir.

STATEMENT

Amount of license fee and interest outstanding in terms of the Migration package in respect of M/s Spice.

(Rs. in crores)

Sl.No.	Service area	Principal	Interest (calculated upto 15-4-2000)	Total**
1.	Karnataka	90.09	45.88	135.97
2.	Punjab	84.61	41.76	126.37

** Apart from this, additional cash penalty is to be paid by the licensee for failure to securitise the amounts due by 31-12-99, and make payments by 31-1-2000.